

## **NWS TAMPA BAY TEAMS WITH THE TIMUCUA BOYSCOUT DISTRICT FOR MERIT BADGE WORKSHOP**

The Timucua District of the Boy Scouts of America and the National Weather Service Office in Tampa Bay teamed up for the Merit Badge Academy on Saturday, March 28, 2009. Merit Badge Academy Chairman Karen Jacobi coordinated with NWS Tampa Bay to designate a Weather Badge Counselor, a task that was undertaken by Forecaster Anthony Reynes. Around 80 Boy Scout members attended the academy session in Plant City, Florida with 4 boys registered for the entire Weather Badge workshop.

The Weather Badge lasted from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm and covered a wide variety of subjects and activities from basic definitions of meteorological terms to more advanced hands-on exercises such as surface map analysis. The workshop included demonstration videos and archived photos of typical hazardous weather situations. The added expertise of counselor Mr. Reynes provided an excellent foundation for the boys to learn how to effectively prepare and react to local hazardous weather events. In the spirit of the principles of the Boy Scout tradition, the workshop strongly emphasized the importance of assuming leadership during weather-related emergencies in order to protect life and property.



***Members of the Boy Scouts Timucua District standing in front of the weather balloon building while visiting the National Weather Service Office in Ruskin, Florida.***

The workshop ended with a demonstration on how to build a “Tornado Box”, which utilizes common building materials found in any home improvement store and provided an exciting project for boys of all ages. The Tornado Box utilizes water steam and a circulating fan in order to generate a rotating funnel cloud which resembles a tornado. This simple but eye-catching project is very helpful in visually demonstrating the basic principles of lift (rising air) and rotation around low pressure systems which are critical in severe weather development. By the end of the workshop, the boys successfully fulfilled all the requirements to earn the Merit Badge in Weather.

The activity received great and enthusiastic feedback from both the boys and the organizers, and promoted future collaboration. It was a great honor for the NWS Tampa Bay office to contribute to the efforts of the Boy Scouts Organization in creating a solid leadership foundation among our youth.